DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 477 826 JC 030 340

AUTHOR	Thompson, Susan
TITLE	Collaboration for Student Success: A System for Providing Transfer Student Performance Information to Feeder Institutions.
PUB DATE	2003-05-18
NOTE	26p.; Paper presented at the Annual Forum of the Association for Institutional Research (43rd, Tampa, FL, May 18-21, 2003).
PUB TYPE	Information Analyses (070) -- Reports - Research (143) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Admission Criteria; *Articulation (Education); College Credits; *College Transfer Students; Community Colleges; Curriculum Development; Educational Mobility; Institutional Cooperation; *Intercollegiate Cooperation ; School Policy; *Transfer Policy; *Transfer Programs; Transfer Rates (College); Transfer Students; Two Year Colleges
IDENTIFIERS	*Southwest Texas State University

ABSTRACT

Southwest Texas State (SWT) University has developed a system of communication with two-year community colleges that aims to provide information about new student performance and identify student needs. About 60% of the 7,000 new undergraduate students first enrolling in SWT each year are transfer students. In 1992, about 60% of new students at SWT were first-time freshmen. The trend toward students beginning their college careers elsewhere necessitates that universities work with feeder institutions in order to help students make a smooth transition. This document describes articulation agreements and transfer planning guides at SWT. SWT has signed formal articulation agreements with seven (12%) of the 59 Texas community colleges. SWT has also prepared equivalency guides for each of the 59 two-year colleges as an alternative to formal agreements. SWT's Transfer Advisory Council (TAC) studies the impacts of transfer admission process and requirements and recommends policies, as well as facilitating interaction between SWT and feeder-institution counselors and providing publicity to those institutions. SWT also generates a Transfer Feedback Report each fall. The report shows the one-year academic performance of new transfer students at the University. Measures of performance include transfer GPA, transfer hours, SWT GPA, SWT semester hours passed, and 1-year retention rates. (NB)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 477 826

Collaboration for Student Success: A System for Providing Transfer Student Performance Information to Feeder Institutions

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

S. Thompson

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Susan Thompson
Research Associate
Vice President for Student Affairs Office
Southwest Texas State University

susan@swt.edu

Paper prepared for presentation at the
Association for Institutional Research (AIR) Annual Forum
May 18-21, 2003
Tampa, Florida

TC030340

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Collaboration for Student Success: A System for Providing
Transfer Student Performance Information to Feeder Institutions

Abstract

Southwest Texas State University has developed a system of communication with two-year community colleges to provide information about new student performance and identify student needs. An annual conference is held on the university campus for community college and university personnel to share information and find ways to facilitate a smooth transition for community college transfer students. In addition, standard reports are generated for each community college sending students to the university to report their students' performance compared to other transfer students. These reports are shared with presidents and counselors of each community college.

Collaboration for Student Success: A System for Providing
Transfer Student Performance Information to Feeder Institutions

Over the course of a year, Southwest Texas State University (SWT) enrolls almost 7,000 new undergraduate students. About 40 percent of the new students first enroll as first-time freshmen, while the remaining 60 percent come to the University as transfer students. We have seen this balance shift during the past decade, as the mix of new students was 60 percent freshmen and 40 percent transfers in 1992. This trend towards students beginning their college careers elsewhere, perhaps closer to home or at a less expensive community college, compels us to work closely with these feeder institutions to ensure that students make a smooth transition when they transfer to our University.

Background

Articulation in higher education is the process of formally defining how course credit and/or programs earned at one institution will be applied toward credit and/or a degree from another institution. The process of articulation assumes that "a uniform value can be assigned to a specific body of knowledge, wherever and however it is acquired" (Robertson & Frier, 1996). For institutions that admit students with prior course credit, articulation agreements can facilitate the transfer process.

The traditional model of articulation is one in which four-year institutions review credits from two-year institutions to determine which courses may be used for credit at the four-year institution (Knoell, 1996). This assumes that the student began their college career at a two-year institution and accumulated some credit or perhaps an associate's degree before transferring to a

four-year college or university to earn a bachelor's degree. Today, student transfer behavior is not so predictable. Students transfer from four-year to two-year institutions, commonly called reverse transfer. Students also transfer back and forth between two-year and four-year institutions in a process known as swirling (Ignash and Townsend, 2000).

The movement of students between higher education institutions has increased with each passing decade. A 1999 survey of state higher education and community college agencies found that, "79% (34) of 43 states had developed statement articulation agreements" (Ignash and Townsend, 2000). Among these 34 states, articulation agreements are structured in various ways. The majority of the states address two-year to four-year college transfer, but many do not address four-year to four-year or four-year to two-year transfer, nor do many states include private institutions in the transfer mix. Texas is one of the states with no statewide articulation agreements in place.

Transfer Student Performance Information at SWT

Articulation agreements and transfer planning guides

SWT has made some progress in developing formal articulation agreements with state community colleges, but progress has been slow. The process involves research by an Academic Affairs staff member on historical transfer activity from the feeder institution, initiation of contact with a senior official at the feeder institution and initial discussions regarding the need for an agreement. Representatives are identified at both institutions and, armed with a volume of catalog course descriptions and sample documents, the representatives begin a review of course descriptions and course syllabi. At a later stage of the process, a work session is held with a

transcript evaluator from the Admissions Office to begin drafting a degree outline or course schedule to list recommended courses on a semesterly or yearly basis. The result is a "2 + 2 format" agreement that is signed by the President of each institution in a formal ceremony.

As of today, SWT has signed formal articulation agreements with seven (12%) out of 59 Texas community colleges (Austin Community College, Blinn College, Laredo Community College, Palo Alto College, San Antonio College, South Texas Community College, and Victoria College). The earliest agreement was signed in 1991, and the most recent were three signed in 2002.

As an alternative to formal articulation agreements, SWT has prepared equivalency guides for each of the 59 Texas two-year colleges. Each guide lists the SWT course equivalent for every course offered by the applicable community college. Guides are updated annually and posted online in a downloadable/printable format. SWT academic departments and all Texas two-year colleges are notified each year of the online guides. The guides are featured on our Admissions web site and through CatsWeb, which is SWT's online version of a "one-stop shop" of student services and information for our students.

Transfer Advisory Council

SWT first established a reporting relationship with the state's community colleges in 1984, when SWT created a Transfer Advisory Council (TAC) to address transfer student issues. The TAC comes together once each year in a daylong meeting hosted by the Admissions Office to discuss issues related to the successful transition of students from the two-year college to the four-year university and ways that SWT can assist the two-year college in preparing students to make that transition. The official charge of the TAC is:

The Transfer Advisory Council studies the impacts of transfer admission process and requirements; recommends policies regarding the admission performance and special needs of transfer students; gives feedback on prospective and new transfer student perceptions of SWT; facilitates interaction between two-year school counselors and SWT personnel; and provides publicity to feeder institutions on SWT requirements, transfer student performance, and other related topics (SWT Roster of Councils, Committees and Teams, 2002-2003).

Membership on the TAC is balanced between SWT and community colleges. University members include representatives from the faculty, academic assessment staff, academic advisors, admissions staff, enrollment management staff, student services staff, and students. Community college membership consists of permanent representatives from the top feeder schools and representatives from other schools chosen on a rotating three-year term basis. Most of the community college representatives are counselors or academic administrators.

Each fall, the University's Admissions Office brings the TAC together on the University campus for a daylong meeting. Typically, the meeting begins with welcomes from the University's academic and/or student service vice presidents, followed by a presentation of transfer student data by the enrollment management director. Community college personnel provide updates about their campuses, including information about enrollment and new programs, and University personnel report information about changes in programs and services. The Admissions Office updates the council on any planned or implemented changes or issues affecting transfer students, and seeks advice from community college representatives on these or

other issues. Throughout the day, members are encouraged to ask questions and raise issues of concern.

The TAC meeting allows University personnel to learn about problems and concerns that potential transfer students are experiencing, while community college personnel receive information that they can use to help students transition from a community college to a four-year university. An example to illustrate the success of this partnership is the issue of students who transfer with few hours completed. Through data presentations and discussions, University personnel have demonstrated that community college students are much more likely to experience "transfer shock," or a significant drop in grade point average, if they transfer with fewer than 30 hours. The gap in GPA begins to narrow for students who transfer with 30+ hours, and nearly disappears for students who delay their transfer until they have completed 60 hours at the community college. Community college personnel have taken that information back to their campuses for use when counseling students.

The need for articulation agreements has also been raised during TAC meetings. A lengthy discussion during the fall 2001 meeting resulted in the Admissions Office receiving funds to hire an additional processor to concentrate on the development of articulation agreements and updates to transfer planning guides.

TAC meetings are held on a Thursday in the fall. On the following Friday, the Day of Dialogue program is held for a larger group of two-year college representatives. During this program, SWT and community college faculty and staff share ideas and concerns, discuss SWT academic programs and transfer credit policies, and provide updates on important issues. SWT updates are usually provided by staff from Academic Affairs, Admissions and Financial Aid. Community college participants have an opportunity to visit with SWT academic department

chairs and deans during a browse session, and a campus tour is provided to all who are interested.

Transfer Feedback Report

SWT is also committed to providing feedback to community colleges about the academic performance of their students. SWT's Institutional Research Office generates the Transfer Feedback Report each fall. This report, designed in collaboration with the Admissions Office, shows the one-year academic performance of new transfer students at the University. Measures of performance include transfer GPA, transfer hours, SWT GPA, SWT semester hours passed, and one-year retention rates. This information is provided in a summary table for all transfers from community colleges. Specific reports are also generated for two community colleges in close proximity to SWT that contribute a majority of the University's transfer students. Less detailed reports are also distributed to all other community colleges contributing to SWT enrollment. Institutional reports are distributed to Transfer Advisory Council participants and mailed to community college presidents each fall.

SWT has often been recognized by the state's community colleges for having established a good relationship with them, and for providing useful and timely feedback to community colleges regarding their students' performance post-transfer. Community college personnel report that having timely feedback regarding their students is very useful to them and something that they would like to receive from other four-year institutions as well. Recently, the president and several administrative staff members from a local community college visited the SWT campus to learn more about the transfer feedback process. The stated purpose of the meeting

was to identify strategies to encourage other Texas four-year institutions to provide similar information regarding transfer students to their institutions.

Implications

It is widely held that growth in the number of students who transfer will continue to increase, and that students will continue to move between institutions for a variety of academic, personal and financial reasons. The trend away from the traditional model of two-year to four-year linear transfer to a swirling pattern will require changes in states with traditional articulation agreements, and will require additional work at the institutional level in states that choose to not address articulation issues at a statewide level.

Another challenge for institutions who receive transfer students is the number of students who begin college without a bachelor's degree as their goal and who may instead pursue more technical training. In a study of transfer students in North Carolina, Farmer and Frederickson (1999) found that just over 30 percent of students transferred from technical programs at community colleges, while the remaining 70 percent came from more traditional academic programs.

As the changes we have seen in transfer students and transfer patterns continue, colleges will be faced with rethinking the ways in which they work together to ensure student success. "As the student population grows more diverse in academic backgrounds, educational goals, enrollment patterns, and socioeconomic status and ethnic heritage, colleges are faced with student tracking challenges, coordination of programs, and articulation of individual courses"

(Rifkin, 1996). Collaboration and exchange of information and ideas between institutions will continue to be a key component in the transition process for transfer students.

References

Farmer, E. I., & Fredrickson, J. C. (1999). Community college students transferring from technical and college transfer programs to four-year institutions. Journal of Vocational Education Research, 24(2), 77-85.

Ignash, J. M., & Townsend, B. K. (2000). Evaluating state-level articulation agreement according to good practice. Community College Review, 28(3), 1-21.

Knoell, D. M. (1996). Moving toward collaboration in transfer and articulation. New Directions for Community Colleges, 96, 55-64.

Rifkin, T. (1996). Transfer and articulation policies: Implications for practice. New Directions for Community Colleges, 86, 77-85.

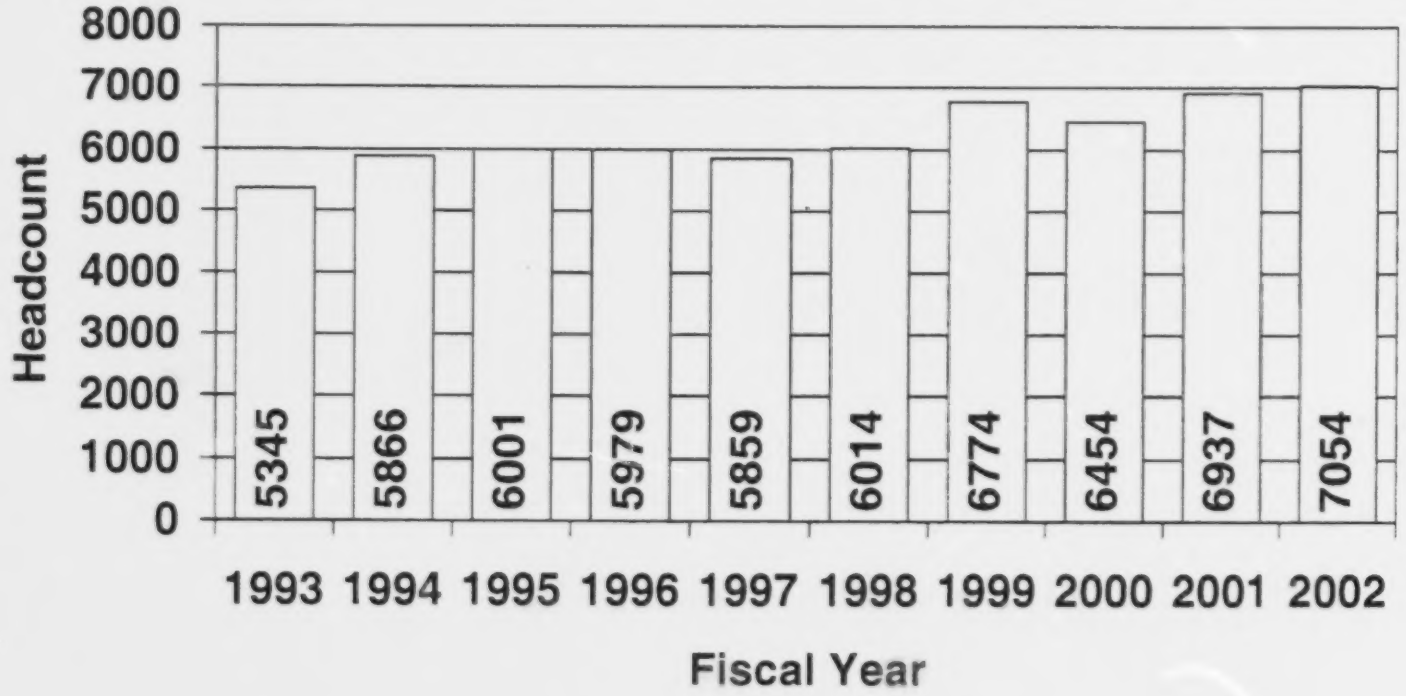
Robertson, P.F., & Frier, T. (1996). The role of the state in transfer and articulation. New Directions for Community Colleges, 96, 15-24.

Collaboration for Student Success: A System for Providing Transfer Student Performance Information to Feeder Institutions

Susan Thompson
Research Associate in Student Affairs
Southwest Texas State University

AIR Forum
May 19, 2003

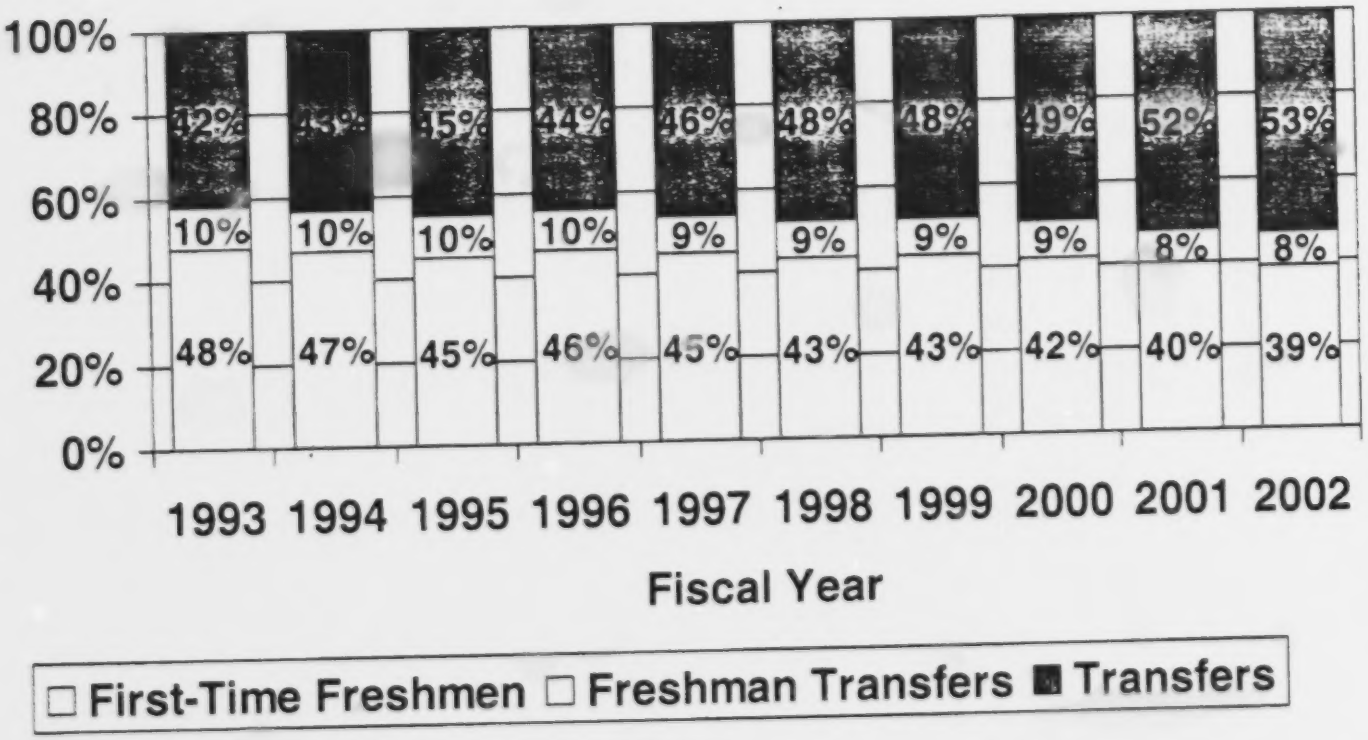
New SWT Undergraduates



1

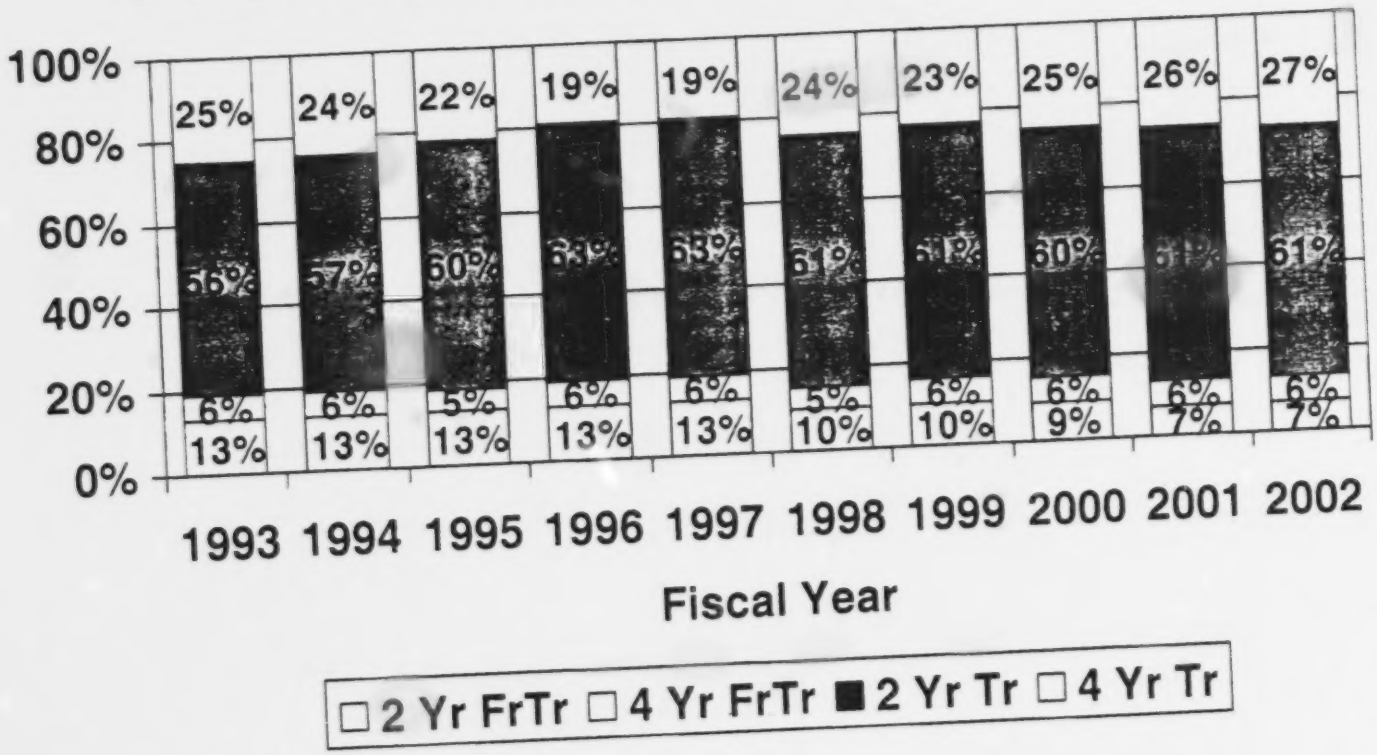
BEST COPY AVAILABLE

New SWT Undergraduates by Admission Category



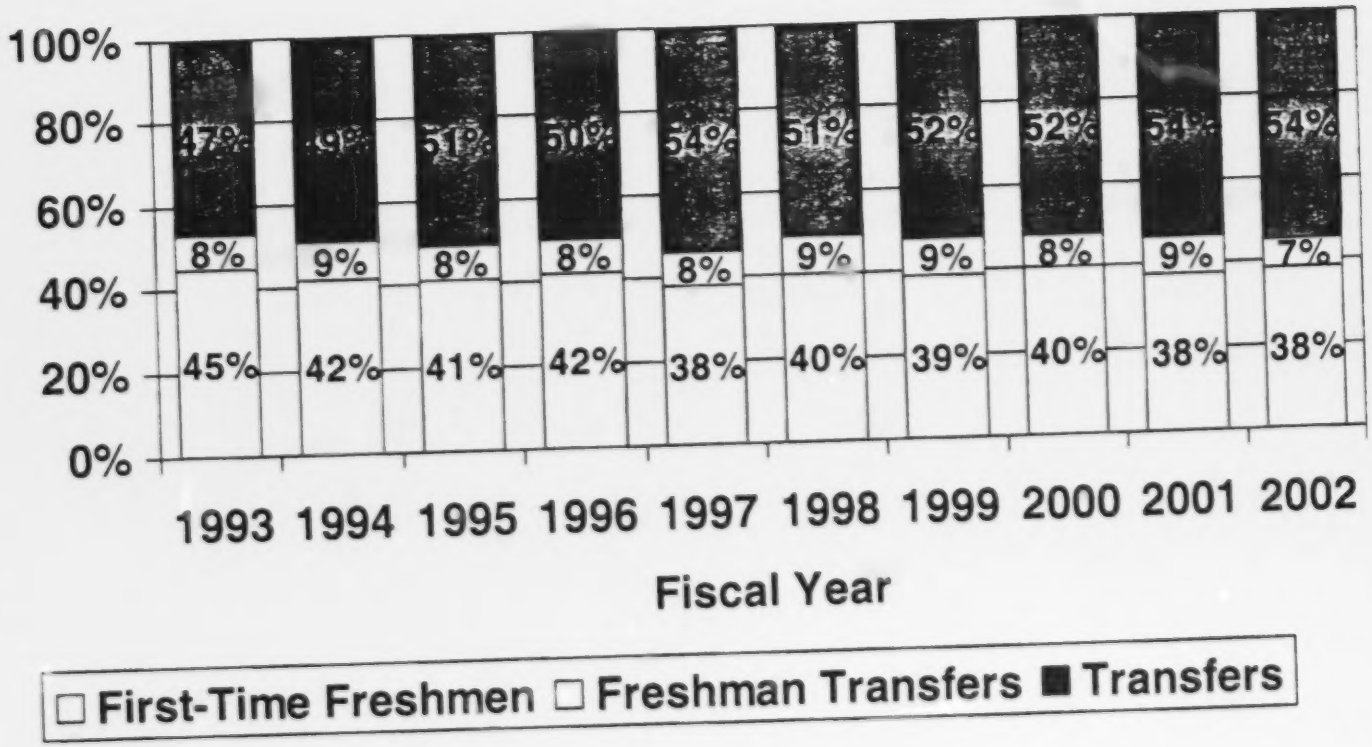
BEST COPY AVAILABLE

New SWT Transfers by Admission Category and Previous Institution Type



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

SWT Bachelor's Degrees Granted by Admission Category



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

SWT Articulation Agreements

- San Antonio College (signed in 1991)
- Austin Community College (1993)
- Laredo Community College (1999)
- Palo Alto College (2001)
- Blinn College (2002)
- Victoria College (2002)
- South Texas Community College (2002)

[Insert slide – CatsWeb listing of equivalency guides]

[Insert slide – sample equivalency guide]

SWT Transfer Advisory Council

- Studies impacts of transfer admission process and requirements
- Recommends policies regarding admission performance and special needs of transfer students
- Gives feedback on prospective and new transfer student perceptions of SWT

SWT Transfer Advisory Council (continued)

- Facilitates interaction between two-year school counselors and SWT personnel
- Provides publicity to feeder institutions on SWT requirements, transfer student performance, and other related topics

Transfer Advisory Council

- Admissions Assoc Director (Chair)
- Academic faculty/chairs/deans (n=5)
- Academic Affairs Curriculum Coordinator
- Assoc VP/Director of Academic Assessment
- Assoc VP/Director of Enrollment Mgt
- Director of Counseling Center
- Academic Advisor
- Multicultural Student Affairs staff
- Student Affairs Research Associate
- Students (n=2)

Transfer Advisory Council

Permanent representatives from:

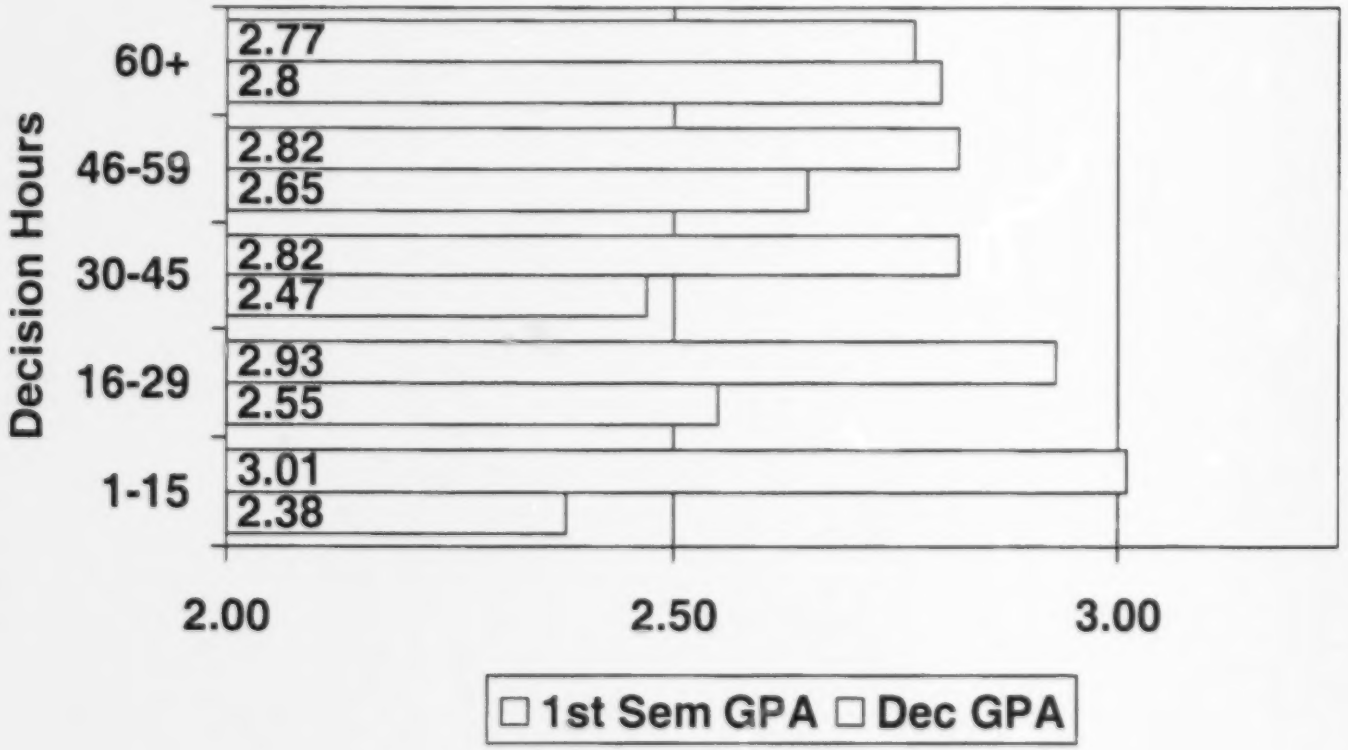
- Austin Community College
- San Antonio College
- Palo Alto College
- St. Phillips College
- Northwest Vista College

Rotating representatives from 5 other colleges.

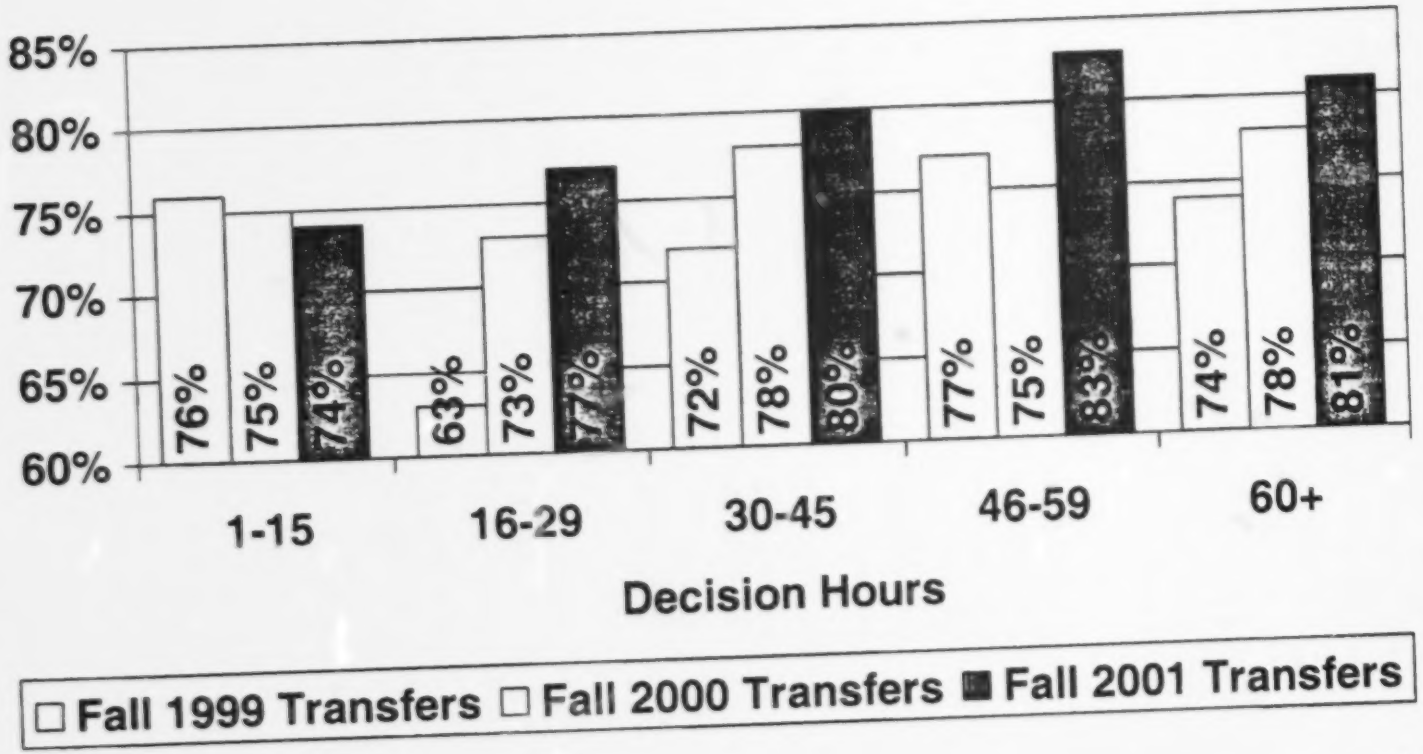
Enr Mgt Presentation to TAC: Demographic Information

- Total headcount, by ethnicity & gender
- New undergraduate headcount, by admission category, previous institution type, semester of entry
- Bachelor's degrees granted by admission category
- 2 year transfers by gender, ethnicity, age, college residence, major college

Decision and 1st Sem GPAs of New 2 Yr Transfers, FY 2002



Fall-to-Fall Retention of 2 Year Transfers



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

ERIC
Educational Resources Information Center

Reproduction Release

(Specific Document)

I. DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION:

Title: Collaboration for Student Success: A System for Providing Transfer Student Performance Infoxmation to Feeder Institutions	
Author(s): Susan Thompson	
Corporate Source:	Publication Date: May 2003

II. REPRODUCTION RELEASE:

In order to disseminate as widely as possible timely and significant materials of interest to the educational community, documents announced in the monthly abstract journal of the ERIC system, Resources in Education (RIE), are usually made available to users in microfiche, reproduced paper copy, and electronic media, and sold through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). Credit is given to the source of each document, and, if reproduction release is granted, one of the following notices is affixed to the document.

If permission is granted to reproduce and disseminate the identified document, please CHECK ONE of the following three options and sign in the indicated space following.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 1 documents	The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2A documents	The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2B documents
PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY SAMPLE TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)	PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE, AND IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA FOR ERIC COLLECTION SUBSCRIBERS ONLY, HAS BEEN GRANTED BY SAMPLE TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)	PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY SAMPLE TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
Level 1	Level 2A	Level 2B
↑ X	↑ ☐	↑ ☐
Check here for Level 1 release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche or other ERIC archival media (e.g. electronic) *and* paper copy.	Check here for Level 2A release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche and in electronic media for ERIC archival collection subscribers only	Check here for Level 2B release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche only
Documents will be processed as indicated provided reproduction quality permits. If permission to reproduce is granted, but no box is checked, documents will be processed at Level 1.		

I hereby grant to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) nonexclusive permission to reproduce and disseminate this document as indicated above. Reproduction from the ERIC microfiche, or electronic media by persons other than ERIC employees and its system contractors requires permission from the copyright holder. Exception is made for non-profit reproduction by libraries and other service agencies to satisfy information needs of educators in response to discrete inquiries.

Signature: Susan Thompson	Printed Name/Position/Title: Susan Thompson, Research Associate	
Organization/Address: Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs Southwest Texas State University 601 University Drive San Marcos, Texas 78666	Telephone: 512-245-2152	Fax: 512-245-7979
	E-mail Address: susan@swt..edu	Date: 7/3/03

III. DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY INFORMATION (FROM NON-ERIC SOURCE):

If permission to reproduce is not granted to ERIC, or, if you wish ERIC to cite the availability of the document from another source, please provide the following information regarding the availability of the document. (ERIC will not announce a document unless it is publicly available, and a dependable source can be specified. Contributors should also be aware that ERIC selection criteria are significantly more stringent for documents that cannot be made available through EDRS.)

Publisher/Distributor:
Address:
Price:

IV. REFERRAL OF ERIC TO COPYRIGHT/REPRODUCTION RIGHTS HOLDER:

If the right to grant this reproduction release is held by someone other than the addressee, please provide the appropriate name and address:

Name:
Address:

V. WHERE TO SEND THIS FORM:

Send this form to the following ERIC Clearinghouse:

However, if solicited by the ERIC Facility, or if making an unsolicited contribution to ERIC, return this form (and the document being contributed) to:

ERIC Processing and Reference Facility
4483-A Forbes Boulevard
Lanham, Maryland 20706
Telephone: 301-552-4200
Toll Free: 800-799-3742
e-mail: ericfac@inet.ed.gov
WWW: http://ericfacility.org